

Preface

Welcome to the fifth edition of *Your Home*—Australia’s most comprehensive guide to environmentally sustainable homes. This publication continues a long-standing effort by the Australian Government, in partnership with the building and design industry, to give everyone interested in building homes for a sustainable future, comprehensive, expert and independent advice.

As a resource for people aiming to build, buy or renovate a sustainable home, *Your Home* has proven its value time and time again. As energy and water costs have increased, along with community awareness of climate change and the need to protect our environment, it has become more and more relevant.

Your Home was originally published as a technical manual in 2001. It was the first Australian publication of information on sustainable building practices aimed at ordinary householders as well as building professionals. From the outset, the printed version was published in parallel with a website that made material readily available to people who don’t need or want the full printed version.

The intent has always been to keep *Your Home* up-to-date, to match significant changes in the building industry. For example, building energy efficiency standards were added to the Building Code of Australia for the first time in 2003 and have been progressively increased over time; water efficiency requirements have been introduced in a number of jurisdictions.

Changes in this edition of *Your Home* respond to user feedback and reviews of previous editions. The major change is that a single publication incorporates the previous technical manual, buyer’s guide and renovator’s guide. The revised structure brings the information needs of home buyers and renovators up-front, and moves some more general topics on housing development to the end of the publication.

The text and diagrams in all sections of *Your Home* have been checked for currency and accuracy and updated where necessary, and references to other documents and websites have been updated. The principal and updating authors are listed at the end of each article.

A new, smaller, set of case studies shows examples of sustainable houses in a variety of climate zones. The need for case studies has lessened with the recent rise of home magazines that contain articles on individual houses and renovations.

Your Home combines the efforts of a large number of committed people over a considerable time. Industry and cross-sectoral support for its development has been part of the project since its inception and crucial to its success. The people include principal and contributing authors, and photographers, many who have given input as members of advisory committees, technical advisers, industry and community representatives, and reviewers of articles.

The residential building industry has openly embraced the idea of ‘green buildings’ and a number of industry programs now promote sustainable approaches to building; however, the need for clear and comprehensive information on design and construction options for householders, builders and design professionals remains undiminished. The authors hope that you find *Your Home* useful in creating your own sustainable home.